



THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

HONORING OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SERVICE BY YOUNG AMERICANS

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TWO VERMONT YOUTH HONORED FOR VOLUNTEERISM AT NATIONAL AWARD CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

***Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning pays tribute to young heroes
from Cornwall and Shelburne as part of four-day recognition events***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Vermont's top two youth volunteers of the year, Emery Tillman, 18, of Cornwall and Todd Boisjoli, 13, of Shelburne, were honored in the nation's capital last night for their outstanding volunteer service during the presentation of The 2012 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. The two young people – along with 100 other top youth volunteers from across the country – received \$1,000 awards as well as personal congratulations from New York Giants quarterback and Super Bowl MVP Eli Manning at the 17th annual award ceremony and gala dinner reception, held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

Emery and Todd were named the top high school and middle level youth volunteers in Vermont in February. In addition to their cash awards, they received engraved silver medallions and an all-expense-paid trip with their parents to Washington, D.C., for this week's recognition events.

Emery, a senior at Middlebury Union High School, has undertaken a variety of volunteer activities as she has traveled around the United States and the world competing in freestyle kayaking events. As a whitewater kayaker, Emery is very sensitive to the condition of the world's waterways, and initially just wanted to clean up river trash. But after helping to organize a cleanup project on the Ottawa River with

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her boarding school, “I knew I had to continue giving back to the community, wherever that community may be,” she said.

So, she has found ways to make a difference everywhere she travels. In Chile, she taught English to middle school students. In Zambia, she helped prepare meals and coached soccer at an orphanage. In Uganda, she volunteered at a malaria clinic. In New Zealand, she participated in a river cleanup. And in the U.S., Emery has organized trash removal projects in most of the rivers where she has competed. In addition, she has worked with a program that encourages young people to choose outdoor activities instead of drugs, and participated in a project to keep trash out of the ocean and Lake Champlain.

Todd, an eighth-grader at Shelburne Community School, has been an active volunteer since he was 5 years old by helping out at his school and by contributing in important ways to the broader community. Todd’s volunteerism began when his mother suggested that he help with a fundraiser for the Vermont Children’s Trust Foundation. He then began looking for ways to make a difference at school.

Over the years, Todd has helped organize school fundraisers, managed the school store, assisted with the elementary school lunch program, participated in a recycling program, educated students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and worked on other volunteer initiatives as a member of his school’s student leadership council. Outside of school, Todd helps referee soccer games in his community and teaches soccer skills to those who want to learn to play. In addition, Todd recently shoveled mud out of homes devastated by Hurricane Irene. Todd said volunteering has given him “a view of how lucky my life is compared to other people in the world. I learned how even doing a few hours of work can make a huge difference to the people who needed the help.”

“Through their extraordinary acts of volunteerism, these students are powerful examples of the way one young person can make a big impact,” said John R. Strangfeld, chairman and CEO of Prudential Financial, Inc. “We are proud to honor them for their achievements, and hope their stories inspire others to consider how they, too, can make a difference.”

More than 26,000 young people participated in the 2012 awards program last fall through schools, Girl Scout councils, county 4-H organizations, American Red Cross chapters, YMCAs and affiliates of the HandsOn Network. The top middle level and high school applicants in each state were selected in February, and flown to Washington this week with their parents for four days of special recognition events.

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Conducted in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards were created 17 years ago by Prudential Financial to encourage youth volunteerism and to identify and reward young role models. Since then, the program has honored more than 100,000 young volunteers at the local, state and national level.

“These young people have demonstrated remarkable leadership, selflessness and compassion, and they set a fine example for thousands of other students across the U.S. who want to make a difference,” said Ken Griffith, president of NASSP. “The actions of these young volunteers exemplify the best of what America’s youth have to offer.”

More information about The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards and this year’s honorees can be found at <http://spirit.prudential.com> or www.nassp.org/spirit.

NASSP (National Association of Secondary School Principals) is the leading organization of and national voice for middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and all school leaders from across the United States and more than 45 countries around the world. The association provides research-based professional development and resources, networking, and advocacy to build the capacity of middle level and high school leaders to continually improve student performance. Reflecting its longstanding commitment to student leadership development as well, NASSP administers the National Honor Society™, National Junior Honor Society®, National Elementary Honor Society®, and National Association of Student Councils®. For more information about NASSP, located in Reston, VA, visit www.nassp.org.

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[Editors: Full-color pictures of the Spirit of Community Awards program logo and medallions are available at <http://spirit.prudential.com/>.]